

Services to County, State & Federal Employees

Sharing Montana's Natural Heritage

Montana's natural heritage is a diverse resource for our citizens and economy, and is central to our quality of life. Good information, such as that provided by the Montana Natural Heritage Program, is needed to maintain this valuable heritage as the state grows and develops.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program is the state's source for information on native animals and plants, emphasizing species of concern and high quality habitats, such as wetlands. The Natural Heritage Program is part of a network of over 70 similar programs in states, provinces, and nations throughout the Western Hemisphere, bringing to Montana the "big picture" perspective on the true status of species and habitats. Heritage biologists and information specialists collect, verify, and disseminate information to a broad range of people and agencies for many uses, including:

Expediting environmental reviews:

Developers and managers benefit from "one-stop shopping" for information on sensitive species and habitats. Heritage data are used by the private and public sectors for mining, timber sales, subdivisions, utility and pipeline corridors, oil and gas developments, and highway construction. Conflicts are avoided because developers can identify sensitive species and areas early in the planning process.

Preventing species endangerment and listings:

Knowing where these resources occur helps developers avoid needless impacts on sensitive habitats, reducing the likelihood of future species listings. In addition, "rarity" is sometimes due simply to a lack of good information. For example, 14 plant species were removed as candidates for federal listing when data from the Heritage Program showed that they were more widespread than previously thought. Likewise, accurate data on listed species are essential to determining when they can be de-listed.

The Natural Heritage Program conducts many surveys and status reports to assist state and federal agencies. These reports will be used to assist with development of everything from highways and bridges to farming technologies. Surveys and status reports completed in FY2004 include:

- ☞ Status Assessment of the Long-styled Thistle;
- ☞ Wetlands of the Missouri River Headwaters;
- ☞ Peatlands of the Kootenai National Forest;
- ☞ Bats of the Pryor Mountains and South-central Montana;
- ☞ Slender Moonwort in Montana;
- ☞ Riparian Forests of the Missouri River;
- ☞ Fire Ecology and Vegetation of Square Butte, Choteau County.

The Natural Heritage Program also completed the on-line Montana Animal Field Guide in FY2004. This guide provides information on identification, habitat, ecology, reproduction, range, and distribution of over 600 of Montana's animals, along with references, photographs, and even call recordings.

Services to Libraries & the Public

Sharing Expertise

The State Library sponsors approximately 50 trainings per year, with over 500 librarians, library staff, and library advocates attending.

In the past year, Montana librarians had the opportunity to attend training sessions on:

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| ☞ Planning for libraries; | ☞ Conducting community assessments; |
| ☞ Marketing libraries and library services; | ☞ Providing quality children's services; |
| ☞ Mending books; | ☞ Advocating for libraries; |
| ☞ Developing community partnerships; | ☞ Using OCLC for interlibrary loans; |
| ☞ Developing board skills for trustees; | ☞ Utilizing the Montana Shared Catalog; |
| ☞ Fundraising; | ☞ And many other topics. |

In addition to the training sessions, the State Library also sponsored several library conferences. Librarians from around the state attend these conferences and use the conferences as an opportunity to share ideas, solve problems, and see what's new in the world of libraries.

The State Library Development Department staff also works on a daily basis with librarians in Montana's 79 public libraries, as well as in approximately 100 of Montana's school or special libraries. Our consultants provide information and assistance on topics ranging from hiring new directors to preparing and defending budgets to using statewide databases.

Sharing Hopes and Dreams

The Montana State Library was selected to receive a \$206,167 "Recruiting and Educating Librarians for the 21st Century" award from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. The State Library used the funds to create the Public Education and Employment for Librarians (PEEL) Program. The three-year grant is being used to fund a statewide promotion/recruitment campaign designed to attract Montana residents to the library profession.

PEEL's goal is simple: to provide the very best in library services to Montanans by helping qualified individuals obtain their MLS degrees, while promoting the value of professional librarianship.

PEEL promises to work on many levels to ultimately provide the very best that libraries can offer to Montana citizens. Montana's libraries are vibrant and important components of communities around the state. The librarians that work in them are absolutely vital to helping their patrons wade through the information age.

Sharing Stories, Ideas, Information, and Adventure

The Montana Talking Book Library (MTBL) offers alternative reading materials for Montana citizens who cannot read or use standard print materials because of a visual, physical, or reading handicap.

In addition to serving nearly 3,000 Montanans by providing almost 48,000 talking book titles, descriptive videos, and large print and Braille books, MTBL staff focused their efforts on educational outreach in order to inform other potential patrons about the service. Almost 200 presentations about MTBL were given around Montana in FY2004. Also, staff provided internal tours, presentations at the Montana Association for the Blind's local chapters, and appeared on a Montana PBS program that reached nearly 12,000 Montana homes. As a result, MTBL received almost 900 new applications for the service.

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Services to the Public

MTBL also houses a state-of-the-art recording studio, where volunteers record Montana-related books and magazines for use by MTBL patrons. Since the installation of the digital recording equipment, production of the books and magazines has increased by 28 percent. These in-house produced items are MTBL's most in-demand services. Also, in FY2004 the director of the National Library Service (NLS) and NLS's Digital Program Planning Coordinator visited the Montana Talking Book Library to learn more about MTBL's recording studio and the digital recording equipment.

MTBL was also accepted into a two-year Lobe Library Pilot project, joining four other state Talking Book libraries, to develop, conduct, and evaluate a multi-state beta test that provides a wide variety of digital audiobook content and services to visually impaired and physically challenged library users. Over 40 patrons will test five Otis digital playback machines with abridged and unabridged books downloaded from Audible.com. The Lobe Library Pilot project is the cutting edge of services for blind and physically handicapped library users. MTBL is always looking for new ways to better serve its patrons, and is proud to have been selected to participate in this innovative program.

Sharing the Best Resources

The Montana Library Network (MLN) is Montana libraries working together to make certain that all Montanans, regardless of community size or location, have access to quality, best-practices-based, networked library materials and services.

Montana libraries that are part of MLN provide their patrons with an enormous quantity of the highest quality information from libraries around the world. To search MLNCAT, all library patrons need is an Internet connection and a Web browser; to search from home, they need a password, which they can get from their home library or from MLN.

With MLNCAT, library patrons can:

- ☞ Search MLNCAT and find the holdings of over 250 Montana libraries and, with an additional click, access WorldCat with its regional, national, and global holdings of more than 58 million records;
- ☞ View checked-in and checked-out information for items in more than 130 Montana libraries;
- ☞ Limit searches geographically (Western Central, Eastern, Hi-Line, statewide, regional, or global libraries);
- ☞ Limit searches by library type (academic, public, school, or special libraries);
- ☞ Choose from six interface languages, including Spanish;
- ☞ Initiate interlibrary loan requests (this is each Montana library's option).

In FY2004, MLN added an unprecedented 27 new libraries to the Montana Shared Catalog, bringing the total number of participating libraries to 56. The Montana Shared Catalog is a powerful tool that helps library patrons locate all types of library information quickly and easily. This easy to use catalog allows users to see tables of content, browse cover art, read book reviews, scan best-seller lists, and even read, in some instances, first chapter excerpts.



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ANNUAL REPORT Fiscal Year 2004



Message From the State Library

Commission Members:

- Al Randall of Troy, Commission Chair
- Gail Staffanson of Sidney, Vice Chair
- Linda McCulloch of Helena, Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Bruce Morton, of Bozeman, Montana State University Libraries
- Donald Allen of Billings
- Caroline Bitz of Box Elder

This past year was one of great change for the State Library, as we continued to work within the strict confines of the last legislative session's budget cuts. With a smaller staff and a significantly smaller budget, the State Library put its best foot forward to continue to provide quality service to our patrons in state and federal government, the public, and Montana's libraries and librarians.

Additionally, former State Librarian Karen Strege made the difficult decision to retire from state government. Karen was a true quality leader for this organization, and helped to keep us moving forward in this quickly changing world. We are sad to see her leave. However, Library Development Director Darlene Staffeldt was promoted to serve as State Librarian, and the State Library staff continued their fine work to provide customer-focused access to local, national, and global information, training, and technology resources.

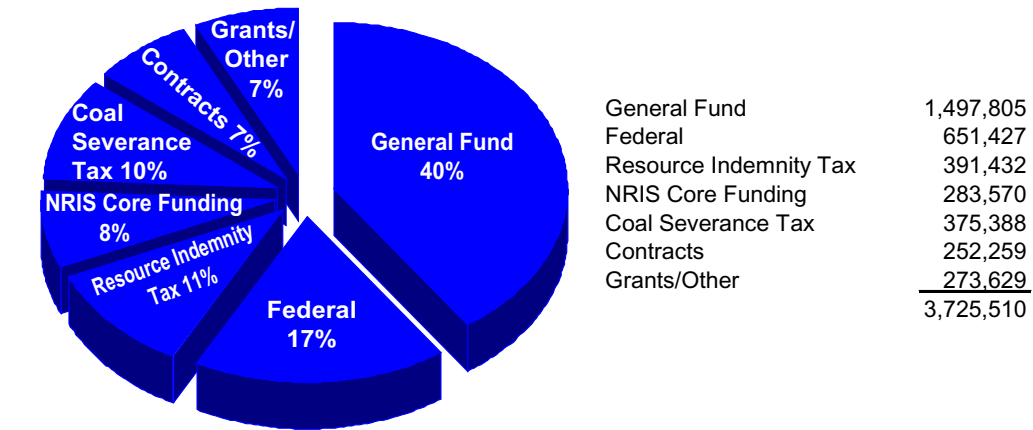
While the State Library could have just cut the quantity of programs and services, or allowed the quality of their work to suffer, neither was true. Indeed, it was the innovation, continued hard work, and sense of dedication of the Montana State Library staff that allowed us to move forward in these trying financial times. Instead of falling back, we moved forward - not only providing and supporting basic services, but finding new ways to move with the times and ahead of the times - helping people and libraries live and work in today's highly technological world.

The future for Montana libraries is bright and exciting, as we have every opportunity to work together to continue to provide the highest quality library services to patrons. With a blend of today's information technologies and old-fashioned personal touch, we have an unprecedented opportunity to increase access to library and information resources for everyone in Montana. I look forward to continuing to work with the State Library, and with the entire Montana library community, to make this opportunity a reality.

Al Randall

Al Randall
MSL Commission

MSL Revenue



Message from the State Librarian

I am pleased to present the Montana State Library's Annual Report for FY2004.

Today, getting information is easy. Type a few words into a search engine, hit "Return" and in less than a second, thousands of pages of information are available. The Montana State Library's mission is to provide maximum access, by the most efficient and effective means, to information for all Montana citizens. However, our job as librarians has shifted from merely providing information to helping people manage the information that is available, and assisting with finding the best information that's out there.

It is, essentially, an issue of quality vs. quantity.

Here in Montana, we talk about quality a lot - our quality of life, of our air and water, of our schools, and indeed, the quality of our libraries. Montana libraries provide very high-quality service to all Montanans with small budgets and small staffs. The Montana State Library is no exception. We work to provide the best quality service to every Montana citizen - either through our direct services or indirectly through our help to their local libraries. We accomplish this with a small budget and a small, extremely dedicated staff.

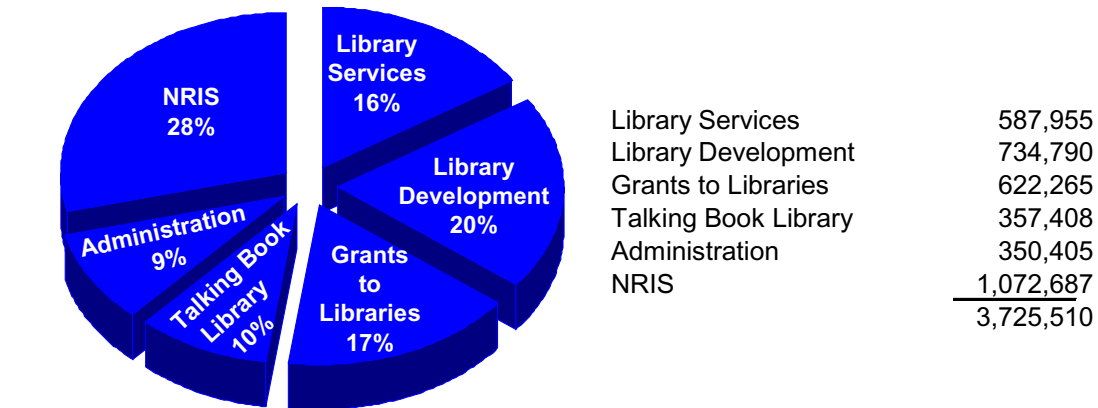
Because we are supported by state and federal dollars, we spend a great deal of time quantifying what it is we do at the State Library. And, while it is essential that we focus on numbers in order to continue receiving the financial support we need, it is also essential that we focus on the quality of services that the Montana State Library provides. It is cyclical in nature: the high quality of our services increases the number of patrons we serve, the number of requests we answer, and indeed, the number of dollars we need to provide that high quality service.

Therefore, this report will focus on both the quality of what we do, as well as on the quantity of our holdings and services. Fiscal year 2004 saw a large number of changes at the State Library, many of which are detailed here in this report. These changes were made due to necessity, but I believe that they have helped us to increase the quality of our service to state employees, Montana's libraries, and to all Montanans.

Darlene Staffeldt

Darlene Staffeldt
Montana State Librarian

MSL Expenditures



Services to County, State & Federal Employees

Sharing Knowledge and Services

The Montana State Digital Library (MSDL) is dedicated to serving the information needs of approximately 13,000 state employees, headquartered around the state. MSDL is mandated to ensure that state government has the resources necessary for an informed workforce, with knowledge of critical issues, to make well-considered decisions. Additionally, MSDL serves the government information needs of all Montanans.

In order to provide the highest quality service to state employees, Montana business owners, and citizens throughout Montana, MSDL continues to shift its focus from traditional print-based services to digital library services - so that patrons may access quality information anywhere at any time - from their desktops or from their work in the field.

Becoming a digital library is a process that does not happen overnight. In addition to eliminating outdated or seldom-used print materials, Digital Library staff are working to identify and implement the best method of capturing the information that is published electronically by government agencies and other relevant information sources. A great deal of information is now made available only via the Web, including such documents as newsletters, reports, and various research items. The work of the Digital Library will help to ensure that the material available only in digital format is not lost forever as Web pages are updated or deleted.

Digital Library holdings will likely continue to be a combination of print and electronic materials, although the transition to largely electronic access to these materials continues, including the implementation of an on-line information request system, an on-line catalog, and on-line mapping applications. However, MSDL continues to maintain the human touch - professional librarians remain available to personally help with hard to locate facts or with complex analysis of professional literature. Information technology professionals are also available to help users become acclimated to newer technology.

Whether required information is hidden in the World Wide Web, or available through a subscription only database and scholarly journals, a simple phone call or e-mail provides a quick and confidential response. From the user's point of view, the Digital Library has the potential to work in concert with traditional library resources and act as an extension to every desktop, classroom, and personal library. And, staff librarians are here to help identify resources, develop search strategies, and filter mountains of information to deliver authoritative, pertinent results to state government and Montana citizens.

Sharing Montana's Natural Resources

Established in 1985 by the Montana Legislature, the mission of the Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) is to make information on Montana's natural resources readily accessible to government agencies, business and industry, and private citizens. As a program of the State Library, NRIS provides expertise that helps people find, understand, and use natural resource-related information.

As part of their mandate to provide readily accessible information on Montana's natural resources to all Montanans, including government agencies, business leaders, and Montana citizens, NRIS introduced a three-level approach to information access. Level one includes pre-formatted maps and related information, featuring themes such as land ownership,

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Services to County, State & Federal Employees

American Indian reservations, cities and towns, and many others. These maps are available for viewing on-line, for printing, or for inserting into documents or presentations. Level two includes on-line, interactive mapping applications that allow users to create custom maps for the geographical area of their choice using various data themes selected from categories including water, land, biology, environmental impacts, and others. Level three provides information access specifically tailored for GIS and information technology professionals.

In 2004, NRIS completed several projects that provide access to additional natural resource information and make accessing the information easier than ever. The projects include:

- Update of entire NRIS Web site to an easier-to-use template;
- Creation of a GIS data dictionary application, now used as the basis for the three-level data access described above;
- Design and implementation of a Montana Maps application;
- Development of a Data Bundler application, allowing users to quickly obtain many GIS data layers for a selected area;
- Improved access to raster data for GIS professionals.

NRIS completed the program's premier data access application, the Digital Atlas, under an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant. The Digital Atlas is analogous to a book atlas, wherein the user is provided limited GIS tools to mine data and create custom maps, featuring information on everything from census blocks to environmental impacts. Data themes served through the Digital Atlas are updated routinely using data obtained from 11 state and eight federal agencies, allowing planners, consultants, and other users to obtain information from a single source that previously required a search of many sources. Natural Heritage Program staff added biological data layers to the Digital Atlas, including species of concern and noxious weeds.

Partnerships

NRIS works on a daily basis with 11 state and eight federal agencies to produce the information available on the NRIS Web site. With NRIS focusing on disseminating the agencies' information, those agencies can concentrate on fulfilling their respective mandates, rather than spending resources to maintain their own data dissemination infrastructure.

In addition to its regular data-sharing partnerships with multiple state and federal agencies, NRIS also developed some new partnerships in FY2004. The National Map is a project of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) aimed at providing users an electronic version of their topographic quadrangle maps on demand via the Internet using the most recent and highest quality data available. NRIS serves as the National Map portal for Montana, supplying much of the information displayed when users view areas in Montana using the National Map.

NRIS has also participated with Geospatial One-Stop, another mechanism for GIS data discovery. Managed by the Department of the Interior in support of the President's Initiative for E-government, Geospatial One-Stop builds upon its partnership with the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) to improve the ability of the public and government to use geospatial information to support the business of government and facilitate decision-making. NRIS' partnerships with these federal data portals provide the highest quality information about Montana's natural resources to people around the world.